

DAILY BULLETIN

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U.S. OFFERS DRAFT TREATY TO HALT FISSILE MATERIAL PRODUCTION

Attempts to break negotiating stalemate by removing verification provisions 1

STATE'S VOLKER DEFENDS INTERNATIONAL ELECTION, RIGHTS MONITOR

United States strongly disagrees with Russian criticism of OSCE 2

U.S. OFFICIALS URGE REBEL GROUPS TO SIGN DAFUR PEACE ACCORD

State's Frazer, USAID's Pierson tell panel food most immediate need 3

MILLENNIUM CHALLENGE CORPORATION SIGNS PACT WITH TANZANIA

MCC chair salutes Tanzanians for seizing their own development future 4



Stephen Rademaker, Acting Assistant Secretary of State for International Security and Nonproliferation

U.S. OFFERS DRAFT TREATY TO HALT FISSILE MATERIAL PRODUCTION

Attempts to break negotiating stalemate by removing verification provisions

By Wendy Lubetkin
Washington File Staff Writer

Geneva -- The United States on May 18 presented a draft global treaty that would halt any future production of the fissile material used to make nuclear weapons, and expressed hope that a final treaty could be completed by the end of 2006.

Stephen Rademaker, acting assistant secretary of state for international security and nonproliferation, set out the proposal in Geneva at the Conference on Disarmament, the body that would negotiate the ban.

"The treaty text that we are putting forward contains the essential provisions that would comprise a successful, legally binding FMCT [Fissile Material Cut-Off Treaty]," Rademaker said. "Our draft treaty has straightforward scope: it bans, after entry into force, the production of fissile material for use in nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices."

The U.S. circulated two documents to Conference on Disarmament members: the short text of a draft mandate that would establish an ad hoc committee to carry out the FMCT negotiations, and a four-page draft treaty to serve as the basis for those negotiations.

Although achieving an FMCT is a broadly shared goal among member states, the 65-nation conference, which

operates by consensus, has been unable to agree on establishing the negotiating committee. Members have been meeting to find a way out of the impasse. Traditionally some conference members have linked commencing talks on an FMCT to unrelated agenda items, a phenomenon Rademaker referred to as "hostage-taking."

The 10-year stalemate has led some to question the viability of the world's only multilateral arms-control negotiating body, and some nations have withdrawn their specialized diplomats from Geneva. Rademaker said the United States believes 2006 will be "critical to the continued existence of the [Conference on Disarmament]." He said President Bush demonstrated "America's renewed commitment" to the body by nominating Christina Rocca as the new U.S. ambassador to the conference.

The United States does not believe that the FMCT could be verified effectively, and the draft text submitted May 18 contains no provisions for verification.

"This does not mean that the treaty would be unverified," Rademaker said. Rather the "primary responsibility for verification would rest with the parties, using their own national means and methods."

If concerns about the compliance of a member state emerge, the draft treaty includes a mechanism for asking the U.N. Security Council to consider the issue.

Rademaker urged delegations to "begin immediate debate" on the treaty draft, with "the objective of approving a text for signature by the end of this year's [Conference on Disarmament] session.

"The point," he said, "is to stop fissile material production as soon as possible.

"One of the purposes served by putting forward our draft treaty today was to underscore how simple the negotiating task is on an FMCT if we set aside the issue of verification," he added.

Rademaker stressed that the U.S. draft text is meant to trigger the initiation of negotiations, and is not being offered on a "take it or leave it basis."

"We hope that the obstacles that have existed in the past can be overcome, and it was in an effort to overcome those obstacles that we offered the proposed text and proposed mandate that we have put forward today," he said. Rademaker's statement and the U.S. draft proposals are available on the Web site of the U.S. Mission to the United Nations in Geneva: <http://geneva.usmission.gov/>

For more information on U.S. policies, see Arms Control and Non-Proliferation:

http://usinfo.state.gov/is/international_security/arms_control.html

STATE'S VOLKER DEFENDS INTERNATIONAL ELECTION, RIGHTS MONITOR

United States strongly disagrees with Russian criticism of OSCE

By Jeffrey Thomas
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington -- A congressional hearing May 18 focused on the controversy surrounding the democracy and human rights programs of Europe's largest human rights group, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE).

A senior State Department official testifying at the hearing rejected recent criticisms of OSCE programs by Russia and other former Soviet republics. The programs at issue are implemented by OSCE's Office of Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), which is celebrating its 15th anniversary and is perhaps best known for its election monitoring. Kurt Volker, the principal deputy assistant secretary of state for European and Eurasian affairs, began his testimony by praising the role ODIHR has played in promoting tolerance, fighting trafficking in persons and providing election assistance to the Palestinian Territories and Afghanistan.

"ODIHR's democracy promotion effort is one of the great success stories of post-Cold War international cooperation," Volker said.

Russia and other former Soviet republics have criticized ODIHR for alleged double standards on human rights, for concentrating excessively on the former Soviet republics, for politicizing election assessments and for interfering in domestic issues, he said.

"The United States strongly disagrees with these criticisms," Volker said.

"All OSCE states signed on to the same commitments to respect human rights and to hold free and fair elections," he said. OSCE election-observation missions base their assessments on standard criteria laid out in a publicly available handbook. As for the contention that OSCE concentrates too much on the former Soviet states, Volker cited many examples of OSCE work "west of Vienna," including the monitoring of U.S. elections in November 2004 and the upcoming midterm elections in November 2006.

He rejected as “unwarranted” the charge of ODIHR “interference” in domestic affairs: “Participating States agreed in Moscow in 1991 that human dimension commitments are ‘matters of direct and legitimate concern to all participating States and do not belong exclusively to the internal affairs of the state concerned.’ We reject as inconsistent criticism of ODIHR for holding true to the mandate all OSCE states charged it with 15 years ago.”

Volker also said the United States will not agree “to any move that would diminish ODIHR’s autonomy or decrease the OSCE’s democracy and human rights work.” He questioned the motives of those making such proposals: “We fear the real issue is not methodology, but the lack of political will among some participating states to implement existing OSCE commitments and to allow the voice of the electorate to be heard.”

In addition, Volker said, “We believe Russia, like all 55 OSCE States, is best served by neighbors that are democratic, prosperous, secure, and integrating together as part of a democratic and market-oriented European and Eurasia political and economic space. This is the best defense against the spread of extremism and terrorism. We seek to work together with Russia to build this kind of strong Euro-Atlantic area, anchored firmly on the full implementation of OSCE’s time-honored principles.”

Vice President Cheney, addressing a summit of leaders from the Baltic and Black Sea states May 4 in Vilnius, Lithuania, criticized opponents of democratic reform and democratic values in Russia. “Russia has a choice to make,” Cheney said. “And there is no question that a return to democratic reform in Russia will generate further success for its people and greater respect among fellow nations.”

ODIHR Director Ambassador Christian Strohal testified as well at the hearing, which was held by the U.S. Helsinki Commission, a bipartisan human rights watchdog. Strohal defended his office, saying the “criticism is not substantive criticism whereby the findings of our election observation reports have been proven to be incorrect.” Like Volker, he rejected the criticism as “an attempt to shift the debate away from unfulfilled commitments.” Strohal said there is a “real electoral crisis in the OSCE region” caused by anti-democratic trends towards limiting competition in elections and marginalizing voter choices. “The conduct of democratic elections can only be established and maintained through a genuine political commitment,” he said.

Several representatives from nongovernmental organizations also testified: Carl Gershman, the president of the National Endowment for Democracy; Jeff Fischer, senior director of the Center for Transitional and Post-Conflict Governance, IFES; Patrick Merloe, senior associate and director of Programs on Election Processes, National Democratic Institute; and Lorne Craner, the president of the International Republican Institute.

For additional information on U.S. policy, see Human Rights: http://usinfo.state.gov/dhr/human_rights.html

U.S. OFFICIALS URGE REBEL GROUPS TO SIGN DARFUR PEACE ACCORD

State’s Frazer, USAID’s Pierson tell panel food most immediate need

By Susan Ellis
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington -- Pressures are mounting on the Sudanese rebel groups that have not yet signed the Darfur Peace Agreement (DPA), namely the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) and the Abdel Wahid-led faction of the Sudan Liberation Movement (SLM), to sign.

U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for Africa Jendayi Frazer told the House International Relations Committee May 18 that failure to sign the DPA “will mean they have no voice in the reconstruction and political leadership of Darfur. We are working steadily to bring these groups back into the process and onto the side of peace,” she told the panel.

Frazer said the Sudanese government and the largest military rebel group in Darfur, led by Minni Menawi, signed the Darfur Peace Agreement on May 5. The agreement “represents an important step forward in this process toward peace and reconciliation” and “marks an historic opportunity to build a peaceful, democratic and secure future for the people of Darfur.”

Lloyd Pierson, assistant administrator of the Bureau for Africa, U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), agreed with Frazer that much work lies ahead to implement the DPA. Pierson said the peace agreements in Darfur and southern Sudan “present USAID with the challenge of translating the political settlements

of power brokers into improved lives for all Sudanese citizens.” He added that Sudan has been at war for the majority of its 50 years of independence, and is left with a decimated infrastructure “unable to serve its resident populations, much less the millions who hope to return to their homes as peace takes hold.”

First among their needs is food. Food assistance was cut by half recently because many international donors failed to fulfill their commitments. In response to the halving of the food aid, Pierson said, “USAID is immediately shipping 47,600 metric tons of food, valued at \$48 million.”

This point also was emphasized by U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Robert B. Zoellick in an interview in London May 18, where he said the U.N. resolution to bolster the African Union (AU) peacekeeping force in Darfur with U.N. forces is a good step, but “we need to get more food into Darfur. ... The World Food Program announced, about the time that we were concluding the agreement, that they were going to have to cut rations for people in Darfur. So you know it was a tragic time [just as we reached a peace accord] and the poor people at the camp see that the food has been cut. So President Bush announced that even though we have already provided 85 percent of the food, that we will provide more.”

Both Frazer and Pierson testified that high-level U.S. officials have made calls to donors that have not come through as well as to other nations’ officials, asking for food commitments and other assistance to Darfur. “The U.S. also urges other donor nations to join in providing: substantial food aid, development and reconstruction assistance, and support for the creation of a robust United Nations peacekeeping operation to protect civilians and create the conditions that will allow displaced persons to return safely to their homes,” Frazer said.

During questioning, Representative Christopher Smith made reference to the many reported cases of violence on civilians by the Jingawit rebels. Numerous reports cite instances of women gathering firewood and seeking water being raped or killed. He asked if steps would be taken to enhance the AU-U.N. peacekeepers’ mandate to protect civilians. Frazer said she has read their mandate and that “the African Union mandate does provide for protection of civilians in imminent danger. The problem is one of communication -- not all of the troops on the ground understand their mandate clearly; it’s also been a problem in command. Not all the sector commanders have enforced that mandate aggressively; and most important, it’s been a problem in capabilities.”

To bolster its capabilities, the AU needs, among other things, air transport to get to the place where atrocities have been committed. “They come after the fact,” Frazer said, adding that she “would expect United States support” in enhancing that mandate with the U.N. peacekeepers and to provide assistance to AMIS (African Union Mission in Sudan) immediately so it can carry out its mandate.

Frazer concluded that despite the “urgent and pressing issue” of Darfur for which the U.S. has rallied its resources and offered a strong response, “it is also important that we not only focus on Darfur, but remain focused on implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), which ended the 22-year civil war between the north and south of Sudan. This is critical to ensuring lasting peace and democracy throughout Sudan.”

For more information, see Darfur Humanitarian Emergency: <http://usinfo.state.gov/af/africa/darfur.html>

MILLENNIUM CHALLENGE CORPORATION SIGNS PACT WITH TANZANIA

MCC chair salutes Tanzanians for seizing their own development future

By Charles W. Corey
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington -- There is a new “invigorating commitment among Tanzanians to take hold of their own future and take hold of their own development” and the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) stands ready to help, pledged the MCC chairman, Ambassador John J. Danilovich.

Danilovich made that pledge May 17 at MCC headquarters in Washington as he joined Tanzanian President Jakaya Mrisho Kikwete and Frederick W. Schieck, deputy administrator of the U.S. Agency for International Development, in signing an \$11.15 million threshold agreement with Tanzania.

Speaking to a distinguished audience of Africanists, diplomats and well-wishers, Danilovich said the “integrated

and results-oriented Threshold Program is a natural outgrowth of this commitment and a perfect fit for Tanzania” The agreement, he added, will help the people of Tanzania “target corruption on a systemic level and to institutionalize the fight against it.

“Corruption threatens democracy, stifles growth, and prevents the delivery of public services from those who need it most. It also discourages foreign and private investment and undercuts the efforts of those laboring to promote a level, transparent playing field for their own development,” he said.

Ambassador Danilovich went on to praise Tanzania for being a country where there is a “new energy and a new optimism ... for taking on tough issues and for pushing forward an agenda of good governance and economic growth.”

MCC threshold agreements are designed for countries that are on the threshold of meeting MCC requirements, meaning they are committed to undertaking the reforms necessary to improve policy performance in the indicators central to eligibility for greater compact assistance.

To date, the MCC has approved approximately \$116 million in threshold program assistance to six countries: Burkina Faso, Malawi, Tanzania, Albania, Paraguay and Zambia. MCC has signed eight compacts totaling more than \$1.5 billion, with Madagascar, Honduras, Cape Verde, Nicaragua, Georgia, Armenia, Vanuatu and Benin.

The threshold agreement with Tanzania, according to Danilovich, will improve the ability of the people at the nation’s nongovernmental sector to monitor the private sector, strengthen the rule of law so that corruption cases can be successfully tried, establish a financial intelligence unit so that financial crimes do not go undetected and increase the transparency of public procurement.

“The agreement that we celebrate today,” he added, “is also about partnership and about mutual commitment and mutual accountability. It is one of several initiatives in which the United States and Tanzania are working together towards good governance and economic prosperity ... which go hand in hand.”

The MCC recognizes the progress Tanzania is making and the threshold agreement, Danilovich stressed, stands as a “testament to Tanzania’s dedication to moving forward and embracing genuine development, growth and poverty reduction.”

In his comments, President Kikwete thanked the American people for their confidence both in his government and the people of Tanzania. He saluted the “noble and pioneering vision” of MCC and said his country has “made progress in stabilizing the economy, improving on the delivery of basic social services and instituting good governance. Thanks to the MCA [Millennium Challenge Account], we can now move forward with greater zeal and strength to important fronts,” on good governance, fighting corruption, promoting economic growth and eliminating poverty.

On behalf of the Tanzanian people, he promised that Tanzanians will “do our part properly to sustain and further entrench the good relations that exist between us. You have shown faith ... confidence ... trust in us. All I can promise is that we will reciprocate.”

Representing USAID, Assistant Administrator Schieck said that in addition to the MCC program, USAID will continue its ongoing assistance program in Tanzania, which presently consists of about \$100 million for programs in education, HIV/AIDS, child health and the environment.

“These are important programs and we are sure they are of great significance to the development of the country.” USAID, Schieck noted, also will help in the administration and implementation of the MCC Threshold Agreement. “We look forward to working with the government of Tanzania in the implementation of the program,” he said.

For additional information, see Millennium Challenge Account:
http://usinfo.state.gov/ei/economic_issues/mca.html

Pleases Note: Most texts and transcript mentioned in the U.S. Mission Daily Bulletin are available via our homepage: <http://geneva.usmission.gov/>

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